

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 490

By Sands

A RESOLUTION to honor Sister Elizabeth Stephens on the
occasion of her retirement.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this legislative body should recognize those citizens who in their years of work have performed with extraordinary dedication and unprecedented devotion; and

WHEREAS, Sister Elizabeth Stephens is one such outstanding person who has served with alacrity and acuity for 20 years in the ministry; and

WHEREAS, for 16 exemplary years, Sister Elizabeth served with distinction in Methodist churches in Rutherford and Maury counties, until she retired on December 31, 1997; and

WHEREAS, her final assignments were serving as minister of the Santa Fe, Goshen, Theta and Godwin Chapell United Methodist churches; and

WHEREAS, a native of St. Louis, Missouri, Sister Elizabeth received her Bachelor's degree in history from Washington University in St. Louis; and

WHEREAS, she was the loving and devoted wife of John Stephens, who passed away in 1966; and

WHEREAS, prior to her superlative tenure in the ministry, Sister Elizabeth worked with her husband at the Central Intelligence Agency; she served as the agency's first female analyst for the Northern European Section; and

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WHEREAS, following her beloved husband's death, Sister Elizabeth devoted the rest of her life to the Lord, returning to school to receive a Bachelor of Arts degree in Religion from the University of South Florida; and

WHEREAS, she received her Master of Divinity degree from the University of the South at Sewanee in 1976; she was at the time only the second woman to attend this Seminary; and

WHEREAS, in 1976, Sister Elizabeth was ordained into the Episcopal Church and was the first woman to be licensed as a Deacon in the diocese of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, her first assignment was as a Chaplain at the Veterans' Hospital in Murfreesboro; and

WHEREAS, her profound admiration for John Wesley led Sister Elizabeth to convert to Methodism, and shortly thereafter she became a Methodist minister; and

WHEREAS, Sister Elizabeth is an active and vital part of the community and her profession, participating in numerous civic organizations, including volunteer work with Meals on Wheels, as well as the Students' Club Book Mart at the Maury County Library; and

WHEREAS, Sister Elizabeth's adroit qualities include the uncommon ability to motivate others to fully realize their potential, perhaps the most valuable of all skills; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we extend to Sister Elizabeth Stephens our best wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement and continued success in future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.